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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001267

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AF/FO, AF/S  
NSC FOR AFRICA SR DIR FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2013  
TAGS: PREL PINS ZI MDC  
SUBJECT: MDC LEADER TSVANGIRAI WELL AND DETERMINED TO MOVE FORWARD

Classified By: JOSEPH G. SULLIVAN FOR REASONS 1.5B/D

1.(c) Tsvangirai released: The Ambassador met MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai at his home on June 23. Except for a bad cold, he was upbeat and determined following his June 20 release from prison after two weeks. Tsvangirai expressed appreciation for the many messages of solidarity received and for the public pressure for his release and for a political solution to Zimbabwe's crisis. Tsvangirai was stoic and strong and determined that neither he nor the MDC would be broken through GOZ tactics of violence, intimidation or humiliation. He acknowledged that his family had feared for his fate inside prison, but said that he was not mistreated by the guards and that the prisoners were very supportive. He suffered only as other prisoners suffered, 150 to a large cell with poor food and inadequate cover for the cold winter nights. Tsvangirai hopes that this second treason charge will never be taken to court and that the first treason charge will be dismissed shortly based on a defense motion following the conclusion of state testimony.

12. (c) MDC politics: Tsvangirai said that the MDC would never be lured into ZANU/PF efforts to divide the MDC and to play up to a supposed moderate group led by Sec Gen Welshman Ncube. Tsvangirai said that all recognized that the MDC derived its strength from unified positions and that anyone acting outside the party had little weight. The Party would be meeting in the next week to chart the way forward, but, while mass action was still part of MDC options, Tsvangirai did not anticipate any such action in the near term. Nor did he believe that pressure for violent action would grow within the MDC.

13. (c) President Bush's travel to Africa/ Need for a roadmap: Tsvangirai was very focused on President Bush's upcoming

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travel to Africa and anxious that Zimbabwe be raised prominently by the US during the visit. Tsvangirai said that what was needed was a "roadmap for resolving the political crisis. The first and most difficult was finding a dignified way for Mugabe to step down. A transition process was next, although its length would depend on the shape and content of a transition. Elections were also critical to restore legitimacy; their timing would depend on the transition. Tsvangirai promised to keep us informed of the status of

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negotiations efforts in anticipation of President Bush's visit.

14. (c) South African and other mediation efforts: Tsvangirai described South African efforts to broker a solution so far as "talks about the conditions and content of inter-party talks. He did take some comfort in a reportedly tough message delivered to Mugabe by Vice President Jacob Zuma following President Mbeki's discussions at the G-8 meetings to the effect that South Africa could not wait indefinitely for a solution to the Zimbabwean crisis. Tsvangirai believed that the South Africans had belatedly accepted that the MDC was essential to a solution and that eventual elections were also necessary. Nonetheless, the South Africans gave preference to stability over democracy and would most like to see the MDC absorbed as a junior partner in a ZANU-PF government. Tsvangirai said he would also be open to any efforts by Father Fidelis to arrange an "ice-breaking" meeting between Mugabe and Tsvangirai. Similarly, Tsvangirai viewed meetings between a Church delegation and senior ZANU-PF leaders as potentially useful because of the seniority of the ZANU delegation. However, Tsvangirai was skeptical of apparently independent initiatives by State Security Minister Goche seeking to talk with Welshman Ncube during Tsvangirai's imprisonment and by Justice Minister Chinamasa offering Tsvangirai the Vice Presidency in a Mnangagwa Presidency. Tsvangirai noted that President Mugabe appeared to show no urgency in finding a solution and to continue searching for a succession formula dominated by ZANU-PF.

5.(c) Comment: ZANU-PF's effort to take advantage of its

suppression of MDC-organized marches, its demonstrated control of the security forces and its ability to imprison and humiliate Tsvangirai have not succeeded. Tsvangirai has emerged undeterred and ZANU-PF will have to recognize the need to deal with him and the MDC in order to resolve the national crisis.

SULLIVAN